Public Lecture Series

"Reflections on the Crisis in Darfur"[1]

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I want to begin with a background to Darfur and my own involvement in it, outline what I see as the main elements of the war, and the main elements in the search for peace, which, as we all know, has so far proved fruitless. Let start with my own arrival in Darfur as a student of social anthropology and moreover one who was defying the advice to research something that was policy-relevant. I went to Darfur in part because there were very few people working in Darfur at that time as scholars. I chose to start my research in a place, and with a group that was almost completely invisible in the written record. There was only half a page on a small camel-owning group in the north of Darfur written by Sir Harold MacMichael in his book *The Arabs of Sudan* in 1922,[3] so they were pretty much invisible in the historical record.

I first arrived in the little placed called Aamo, where the sheik of this tribe had his court, in November of 1985. This was a desolate spot in the wastes of northern Darfur. It was a rock-strewn plain, surrounded by stubby mountains, granitic stubs that were left by volcanoes, ringing the horizon, and just a few thorn trees. It was just a couple of months after the rains, but the place was already completely dry. And there, pitched on the sand between the rocks and stones were a cluster of tents and a few camels. This was where a small nomadic group had settled. It has been their base, their court, for a number of years. It was a formerly proud group that was actually the largest camel-owning group in northern Darfur.

Their sheikh, a man called Hilal Mohammed Abdalla who was, at that time, 80 years old, nearly blind and bed-ridden, welcomed me with the generosity that is so characteristic of all Darfurians. He welcomed me into his tent, where he had all the things you needed as the leader of a nomadic group: He had swords, a couple of Remington rifles, saddlebags, water carriers, etcetera and a beautiful carpet which he spread out on the sand, and a silver tea set. He did his best to entertain me in the manner which he considered appropriate, but he was really living in very strained circumstances, but also he was living in the past and in the

[1] Transcription of a public lecture presented at the University of Melbourne on 4 April 2007.

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[3] Harold Alfred MacMichael, *A History of the Arabs in the Sudan* (1922) Cambridge University Press. (Reprinted 1967, Barnes & Noble).

world of illusion. He said 'my people, my clan – we're so rich, we just live off camels, none of us will ever need to cultivate'. But just half an hour's walk away, were some of his kinsmen just scratching at this dry earth, to try and grow a few heads of millet and not really succeeding. And we saw some of his sons and grandsons, very few of whom had been to school. It was one of the most pitiful sights, frankly, in the whole of Darfur. These people, through drought, through desertification, had really lost most of their means of livelihood.

Theirs was not a way of life that was changing: It was a way of life that was dying. Sheikh Hilal described it to me as such. He described the way that the cosmic order (which had been characterized by friendly interaction, by reciprocity, by economic interdependence between his group who were nomadic Arabs and the sedentary farmers who lived to the south) [was changing]; how the migration routes for his camels were blocked; how the wind was now blowing sand onto the pastures where they used to graze their camels; how the rainstorms, which occurred fiercer but much less frequent than before, were carving gullies through the hillside; and how the farmers who used to welcome them with hospitality, asking them to graze their camels on the stubble, were actually now shunning them.

I spent some time with this group and then went on to study other communities in Darfur. But Sheikh Hilal's vision of this way of life that was changing stayed with me. Some years later, when I saw the U.S. State Department's list of suspected war criminals, I recognized number one on the list: It was [Sheikh Hilal's] son, Musa Hilal, head of the Janjaweed. While Sheikh Hilal was famous for the justice that he delivered his court, his son became even more famous for the injustice and the terror which he meted out across the region of Darfur.

I tell this story partly in order to stress that those who inflicted this horrible genocidal violence across Darfur are themselves victims, and also to stress the way in which an 'Arab-non-Arab' or an 'Arab-African' (which is the [binary] language which is now used) is a misleading lens through which to portray Darfur. Because one of the interesting little biographical snippets about Musa Hilal is this: The war in Darfur actually started back in the 1980s (I will come onto that point in a moment), and [Musa Hilal] was famous for his ruthlessness, right from 1988 onwards. In fact, the then government tried to imprison him in 1988. He was in fact imprisoned many years later, in 2002. And when the war heated-up in 2003, he was released from prison on the other side of Sudan (he had been imprisoned on the Eastern side of Sudan), and sent back. But the first thing he did was not to take charge of his Janjaweed brigades. The first thing he did was to send a message to the Chairman of the Sudan Liberation Movement, the group that was actually fighting the Government, a man called Abdulwahid Mohamed al Nur, saying 'I want to meet you'. He tried to have a mission; he tried to actually cross the government lines, to meet with Abdulwahid. And the message he sent was 'we are all Darfurians, and I, like you, do not trust this Government'. He was actually stopped because the villages in his way, the Fur

villages (the Fur are the largest non-Arab group in the region), did not trust him, they did not believe him, so they blocked his way. So he never got to meet Abdulwahid, head of the Sudan Liberation Movement. But do not underestimate the fact that in the future, the loyalty of Darfur's Arabs may well be more deeply attached to Darfur than to the Sudan Government. I think that the thing that the Sudanese Government is most fearful of today is the fact that the Arabs may switch their allegiance. Let me just give a bit of background, answer a few basic questions, in order to put these little vignettes into context.

First of all, 'who are the Darfurians?' There are about six million Darfurians. They live in the western-most region of Sudan, a vast area that was, from 1600 to 1916, an independent Sultanate. They have stronger claim to self-determination, to statehood, than many [areas] that exist as states today. [The area] had a very brief experience of colonization, just 39 years, and the largest number of British colonial officers ever present in Darfur at any one time was nine. This was a very light colonial imprint. The place, frankly, was neglected and that was the problem. The problem was not that the British came in and transformed society. In fact, the problem was that [the British] did absolutely nothing. The railway was built to the south Darfur capital Nyala by an independent government in 1960. The place is vast and remote. When I lived in Nyala, there was a very simple railway timetable: There was one train a week to Khartoum and the timetable was that the train would leave on Monday, sharp. It did not always leave according to schedule. And the friends I know who took that train, I think suspected that the cattle travelled in more comfort than the human beings.

The distinction between Arabs and Africans is, I think, very much an artificial one. They look alike, they are long intermarried. The Arabs historically were basically livestock-keepers and more nomadic, the non-Arabs the majority group in the centre of Darfur… were mostly farmers. But the distinction never really took on a political significance until fairly recently. Darfur, when it was a state, was a multi-ethnic state. It was, according to the historians who studied it, bilingual. It was a Muslim sultanate; all Darfurians are Muslim. The languages used at court were Fur for political affairs and Arabic for legal affairs and religion, because one of the advantages of being a Muslim state was that you could adopt Islam, and with Islam came a whole administrative and legal system, you had a ready-made system for administering a state: You did not need to make it up – it was already there. The area was already bilingual, if you like, both politically and linguistically.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, a feudal system of land tenure called the *hakura* system was established, whereby land grants were given to individuals. These could vary between small grants for an individual to have an estate, worked by local people, peasants and also slaves, to larger grants of jurisdiction which were given to a chief who would gather around him his people. The big Arab leaders in south Darfur were given huge *hakura* where they herded their cattle and they cultivated and they intermarried with local people. The nomadic

Arabs of the north were not [given large areas] because they were nomadic: they did not need land to settle.

To this day, if you look at the groups who are involved, you recognize that 'land hunger' is one of the issues. The Arabs of the south have basically not been involved in this war. It has basically been a relatively small group of Arabs from Darfur and Arabs from Chad that have been involved. In fact, one of the largest, most powerful and best armed Arab groups, the Rizeigat, in south-east Darfur have stayed studiously neutral. The younger brother of the paramount chief of this group was actually the chief negotiator for the rebels in the Darfur peace talks. One of the interesting things in the Darfur peace talks was that you would see a very distinguished, slightly elderly Arab from the most eminent Arab family of Darfur negotiating on behalf of the rebels. And you would see a member of the Fur tribe, a prominent Fur leader who had been co-opted by the [Sudanese] Government, on the other side. So this 'Arab-African' thing is, really, a bit of a misrepresentation.

Darfur was the last part of Sudan to be incorporated into the Territory on the 1st of January 1917. Not today, but a few years ago, there were [still] many people who remember what it was like when Darfur was an independent sultanate. But as I said, it was neglected: it was the place with the worst development indicators, with the fewest schools, the fewest hospitals, a lack of roads. The Darfurians themselves were incredibly resilient and able to survive the adversities of dry-ups and famines with incomparable skill – real experts in this regard. But they were hugely neglected and unable, really, to participate in central government in a way commensurate with their numbers and capabilities.

Sudan is one of the most extraordinarily unequal countries in the world. If you go to Khartoum, you will see a thriving modern city, a middle-income city, a thriving city, a city that would not be out of place in Egypt, or anywhere in the Arab world. In the central part of Sudan, if it were an independent state, the GDP per capita is well over [USD] $2000 [per annum]. This is a middle-income area. You go to other parts of Sudan, not just Darfur, but also in the south and the east, you will find people trying to live on [USD] $100 per year. Well over half the national income is in the capital and the surrounding areas, and it is that inequality which is at the root [not only] of the revolt of the Darfurians, but also of the war in the south [and] also of the problems in other parts of the country.

The Sudan Government has adopted Islamism and Arabism as its ideologies. But the period in which they really adhered to these as proactive fervent ideologies was brief, because they did not work. Ten or twelve years ago, President Omar Al-Bashir set out on an ambitious and titanic transformation of Sudan into an Islamic state. It just did not work, it failed. It was just something that was incapable of happening. What they reverted to, as they fell-out amongst themselves, as the prospect of money from oil began to come on-stream, they reverted to the traditional pattern [of control], with the central Sudanese elite

which had commanded the state before colonization in the nineteenth century. They just want power – to hang on to power. And they pursue a type of politics that I described as 'retail politics'. Essentially, their approach to governing the peripheries is to buy and sell the members of the elites one-by-one. They try to buy them. They offer them money or position, whether they be tribal leaders, whether they be members of the elite, members, indeed, of the opposition.

And one of the difficulties in doing any sort of politics, of doing any sort of mediation to end a war is that, while you are talking, perhaps, about the text of [an agreement] on power-sharing or wealth-sharing or on institutions that are going to be setup, the [Sudanese] Government delegate is there with a suitcase full of banknotes and his aim is to brush aside whatever document is signed and actually just buy-off individuals. Sadly, given the huge disparity in resources between the centre and the periphery, and a growing disparity [at that], they are, unfortunately, often all too successful.

Just one illustration of that growing disparity: Ten years ago, the budget of the Central Government was [USD] $890 million per year. It has now grown to over [USD] $11 billion. Ten years ago, when the central government was relatively impoverished, a group of prominent Darfurians from within the Government, sympathizers within the Islamic movement, wrote a critique of the Government, called *The Black Book* in which they documented the systematic marginalization of Darfur, the under-provision of resources and [political representation] to Darfur. That has not changed, it is just that the centre has grown many times richer, basically on oil money, since then.

Who are the rebels? There are two rebel movements. There is a small group which grew out of the dissident Islamic movement, called the 'Justice and Equality Movement' (JEM). These were Darfurians who had joined the Islamist movement because they felt, as black Sudanese Muslims, that Islam was the route to emancipation. They felt that the Islamic movement was genuine in saying 'all Muslims are equal; all Muslims should have an equal stake in Sudan'. The Islamic movement has always had a mixture of Arabism and Islamism. They felt that the Islamic movement was putting Islamism above Arabism and that therefore this would be the route towards [becoming] equal citizens of Sudan. By the end of the 1990s, they said 'this is not true; we are too black for the Islamic movement in Sudan', and they began to organise opposition, but they remained a relatively small group.

The larger and more influential group of Darfur rebels began as the Darfur Liberation Front, and changed its name in 2003 to the Sudan Liberation Movement, with the Sudan Liberation Army becoming the military wing. This was an amalgam, a three-fold amalgam. At the grass-roots, it basically [took the shape of] village-based resistance committees; groups that had grown up, at village level, to protect the villages from the disorder that had begun to spread over Darfur from the 1980s onwards, basically, the complete collapse of law and

order and the propensity of the government to try and administer the region by distributing arms to certain tribes, basically to the Arab tribes in northern Darfur. So [the Darfur Liberation Front] armed themselves to protect themselves.

There was not really much of a political agenda: They did it on a localized basis. The weakness of these groups was basically the lack of leadership: They did not coordinate. There would be a war in the central part [of Darfur] in 1987-1989 and the Fur group would arm themselves, but then the other major groups were not interested – it was not directly affecting them. Then there was another war in the Masalit area in the 1990s, and the Masalit organised themselves, but at that time the Fur were not properly organized. But then the Zaghawa in the far north organized themselves. The Zahawa had an advantage because they are a trans-border tribe, and many of their members are in Chad. The president of Chad is himself from the Zaghawa tribe, and although he himself was not ready to support [the tribe], many of his kinsmen were, and they were able to obtain arms from their own kinsmen in Chad. But, again, they did not coordinate very well. So there were different resistance movements bubbling up. In 2003 they were brought together in some form of, not very effective, coordination.

It was a mixture of tribally-based movements and the leadership of the Fur and the Zaghawa, never really got on [with one another]. The leader of the Zaghawa group, Mini Minawi, was extremely aggressive, and had a very mobile, militarily effective force, but not a very large force. The group in the centre [of Darfur] had much greater support, and larger numbers of soldiers, but had fewer armaments and, as a result, less visibility in terms of the areas where it could strike, and the territory it could control. And Mini Minawi and Abdulwahid never got on – they were always rivals, and that split the movement and deeply damaged it.

I began with a description of this poor, impoverished, disadvantaged Arab group in northern Darfur. This is sort of the epicentre of the Darfur crisis. But the origins of the Janjaweed are more complicated than that. One of the things that I did not know at the time, in the mid-1980s, was that the people that I visited, the people of Sheikh Hilal were smuggling weapons from Libya to the Chadian militia. Libya was involved in the war in Chad. It was using the militias in Chad as its proxies, and it was smuggling weapons [to those militia] through Darfur. When the war in Chad took a turn for the worse, for Libya (the CIA and the U.S. drove out Libya and its proxies), this militia withdrew into Darfur when it supported the then Sudan Government and, of course, its friends in Darfur, this group. Large numbers of militiamen came in. These were the original Janjaweed. This is, in fact, where the Janjaweed came from. It was a spill-over of the Chadian war into Darfur: An alliance between several of the groups in Chad and this group, and the group I just described in northern Darfur.

It was a local affair initially, it did not have much to do with the politics of Khartoum. But Khartoum at first tolerated it, and then used them to police Darfur. As these people, particularly in the western part, the ones of Chadian origin, as

they came in larger numbers, they demanded to act. The Sudan Government gave them the means to act: They gave them senior tribal positions. As it were, they re-drew the tribal map and gave them new positions called *amir* ('prince'). And this was part of the militarization of the tribe. Many of these people were not just *amir*, they were *amir al jihad* – princes of the holy war. The tribal structure on the Arab side was becoming a military structure. That was the origin of the Janjaweed.

When the rebellion began to gather pace in 2003, the first response of the local authorities in Darfur was: 'Let's negotiate'. But very quickly, they were overruled by military intelligence who were worried, first of all, about the military successes of the rebels, who were doing very well in 2003, and also by the fact that this Islamist group [the Justice and Equality Movement] was among them. [The JEM was] small, but [military intelligence] was very scared of them because they had a presence in Khartoum. They thought: 'These guys will launch a coup'. So their response was extraordinarily vicious.

[The Government's response] was to arm the Janjaweed, starting with the Chadians and the north Darfur Janjaweed and then spreading more widely into a number of militia who were not historically Janjaweed but became part of the 'Janjaweedism' phenomena. [These groups] were unleashed: They were basically told: 'Do what you like, don't report back'. Two huge offences in 2003 killed tens of thousands of people and displaced perhaps two million more. And that was really the peak of the atrocities. That was the period that Darfurians, the Sudanese, and – I think – the rest of the world, were actually stunned by the intensity of the horror that was unleashed. It was something beyond people's expectations. There had been war in south Sudan for twenty years, and that had had many, many horrific episodes of genocidal massacre, forced displacement, slavery, but this was on a larger scale. It was not intrinsically different, but it was more rapid and covered a larger area than any of the campaigns that had been unleashed beforehand. After that, the war spread to other parts of Darfur, and the same pattern continued, though not on the same scale.

Is it genocide? I think that this is an interesting and difficult question to answer, and it really depends on what you mean by 'genocide', which may sound like a cop-out, but I think that it is actually quite a significant question. If you read the *Genocide Convention*,[4] it provides an extraordinarily broad definition of 'genocide'. It is: "Acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, an ethnic, racial or religious group, including killing, inflicting harm, preventing births in the group" etcetera. If you take a text-book definition of genocide, if you apply those criteria strictly, then there is no question that this is genocide. But it would also be the case, if you apply this [definition] strictly that at least half a dozen

[4] Full text of the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* is available at http://www.hrweb.org/legal/genocide.html .

episodes during the Sudanese civil wars before 2003 would also be genocide, and many, many other episodes occurring in the context of ethnic war and counter-insurgency operations in other countries such as Somalia, Congo, Mali, Uganda, etcetera, etcetera [would also fall under this definition].

If you take the spirit that motivated the drafting of the *Genocide Convention*, that genocide is a really exceptional crime, a crime that is above and beyond the excesses of ethnic counter-insurgency, the deliberate complete elimination of a racial or religious group on ideological grounds, then I think we have to question whether Darfur is genocide, because it is not Rwanda, where there was a very nearly successful attempt to wipe out every single member of the Tutsi minority. It is not the Holocaust. It is terrible, and there is absolutely no excusing it, but it does not fit that definition of genocide. Which is not to say that the crimes against humanity that have been committed are any less heinous than genocide, which is the conclusion that the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur came to,[5] which is to say that genocide is a description which does not fit this pattern of particularly heinous crimes.

Let me move on to two more issues. One is the attempt to make peace, which has not succeeded. The other is the issue of international troops in Darfur. Very quickly, soon after the war broke out, or when the war first came to international attention in 2003, there were attempts to negotiate peace. During the last 6 months of those negotiations, I was an adviser. That means that I gave advice, but not that it was necessarily taken.

The mediation operated under some very, very serious constraints. I just want to mention three of those constraints. The first was that the mediation took place in the context of a peace agreement that had been signed between the north and south Sudanese contingents, the so-called *Comprehensive Peace Agreement* [CPA].[6] Now, the name 'Comprehensive' is a bit of a misnomer, because [the Agreement] did not include any specific provisions for Darfur. [The Comprehensive Peace Agreement] was signed in January 2005. Now, the then leader of the SPLM [the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement], John Garang, who was, unfortunately, subsequently killed in a helicopter crash a few months later, saw [the Comprehensive Peace Agreement] not as the end-state, as a power-sharing [agreement] between his group (the SPLM) and the Government in Khartoum. He saw it as the beginning, as the foundation, for a transformation of Sudan. And he was very explicit about that. He said 'once we have achieved peace, now we go on to continue our struggle by political means'. And he had every intention of becoming President of Sudan in the national elections that are

[5] The full report of the *Report of the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur* is available at http://www.ohchr.org/english/darfur.htm.

[6] Full text of the various documents constituting the *Comprehensive Peace Agreement* can be accessed at http://www.usip.org/library/pa/sudan/cpa01092005/cpa_toc.html.

scheduled to be held in 2008-9. What he wanted was a ‘New Sudan’, that was democratic and which had equality amongst all people. [A Sudan that] did not discriminate on the basis of race, religion or ethnicity. This was a vision that was tremendously attractive to the people of Darfur. Had Garang lived and had he come to the negotiations and had he said to the representatives who were sitting there, ‘sign, and become part of this process, become part of the democratic transformation. Make an alliance with me and we will be the majority in Sudan’, I have no doubt that [the participants in the peace negotiations] would have signed any piece of paper, in order to become part of that. When Garang died, I think this spirit, perhaps did not die, but it was certainly greatly lessened.

As far as the Darfurians were concerned, the *Comprehensive Peace Agreement* was no longer the potential basis for their coming to power, their participation in elections and their becoming part of a grand coalition of all the Sudanese people who had been marginalized by this Government and by its predecessors. Rather, [the Agreement] was more of a ceiling on their aspirations. They looked at the CPA and they said: ‘The southerners get a region, the southerners get a Vice-President. Why are we not entitled to that?’ One of the constraints on the mediation was that the international community (The UN, the Security Council, the U.S. Government) said: ‘Do not touch the CPA. This is such an achievement, bringing to an end such an extraordinarily bloody war that raged for two decades and killed up to two million people. We do not want to jeopardise [the CPA]. Do not touch it’. The Darfurian armed groups, the rebels, who were represented in Abuja, felt deeply unhappy because they felt that they should be entitled to revise [the CPA]. Hence, one of the tasks which was not successfully achieved was to try to bring the Darfurians into the spirit of [the CPA].

Another constraint was the division among the movements. These were movements that had [failed to] defeat the Sudanese Government partly because of their own internal divisions, and their lack of internal political infrastructure. I think that many of them wanted the negotiations to be the occasion on which the Government surrendered power: ‘Okay, you take Darfur’. Now justice might say: ‘Yes, this is what should happen, because of the terrible crimes committed’. But I am afraid that the reality was that the Government still held most of the power. If the Government had been defeated on the battlefield, it would have been a different story, but they were not about to yield power that they still had through a process of negotiation.

As I said before, the real story was [about] parallel negotiations. It was actually the leaders of the movements themselves, doing backdoor negotiations with the Government, asking: ‘What can I get out of this personally?’. It was dismally depressing to see this going on and to see that the amount of money on offer [in the main negotiations], they did not consider to be good enough. So, the leadership of the movements actually were a great disappointment to many Darfurians. Though, that is not to say that the Government does not bear, by far, the greater responsibility for this process.

The last parallel negotiation was what was happening between the United States and the Sudan Government. This was not an autonomous negotiation, it was one [undertaken] in the shadow of the main negotiation. Let me digress into the issue of UN troops before explaining how [the United States-Sudan negotiation] worked. The African Union sent troops into Darfur in the middle of 2004. For 12 months, those troops actually did a remarkably good job. That was a time of greater stability, a time when greater humanitarian access was provided [by the Sudanese Government] to Darfur than at any time before or since.

Now, everyone knew the limitations of the AU, but I think that the next step taken by the United States Government was a major mistake. In May 2005, the U.S. Government began saying: 'The AU must hand-over to the UN'. Now, why was [the U.S.] saying this? They were saying this because there was huge pressure for an armed intervention, by the U.S., in Darfur. The White House, in order to deflect attention from its own lack of action said: 'We will pass this on to the UN'. Actually, there were multiple U.S. policies at that time: The [policy of] Congress was: 'Khartoum is evil, let's go get them'. The State Department policy was: 'Let's protect the *Comprehensive Peace Agreement*; don't touch that.' The U.S. Agency for International Development policy was: 'We must do anything we can to improve humanitarian access, and we are quite sympathetic to the Darfur rebels'. The CIA said: 'Let's cooperate with Khartoum because they give us good counter-terrorism information'. The Pentagon said: 'We don't want to go there'. The Pentagon did not provide even one aeroplane to airlift African Union troops into Darfur. They said that they could not spare one from Iraq. And so, what did the White House do? They said: 'We will send the UN'.

Why should the U.S. which has been opposed to the UN on every other count say this? The reason is an utterly, utterly cynical one. The White House did not want to be in the firing line, and it knew that the UN would not be able to deliver what it seemed to be promising. The UN operation would be a classic peacekeeping operation; it would take 6-9 months to set up; it would be principally [comprised of] African troops; its mandate would be a Chapter VII mandate, which means [that] they would be allowed to use force. But in practice, it would be classic peacekeeping, with a bit of extra muscle to shoot back if it got into trouble. It would not be that different from the African Union force. In fact, most of them would be the same troops, just with different hats on. Now, the American Government actually did a superb job of selling [the idea of a UN peacekeeping force]. Several American Groups, including the International Crisis Group,[7] headed by, a well-known citizen of this country [Gareth Evans], fell for it, hook, line and sinker.

Every time I went to see the UN peacekeeping people in New York, they said: 'Why is the world pretending that we are going to do something different than we normally do? They know that they UN can not disarm the Janjaweed. We cannot

[7] The website of the International Crisis Group can be accessed at: http://www.crisisgroup.org/

be asked to do that. We know that the UN cannot be asked to protect civilians. We cannot do that. We are being set up to fail'. The African Union was set up to fail, and now, I am afraid, the UN was being set up to fail.

The way that this rebounded on the African Union was a big shame. The African Union was doing quite well, but the moment that the [African Union] troops in the field were told, 'you are second best, you are not really up to the job', their morale began to go down. Then they were starved of resources. Instead of more resources being pumped-in, the attitude was: 'Well, they don't really need to be provided with resources because they are going to be out in a few months anyway'. At one point, they went for two months without pay. Sometimes, they went for a month without fuel. Sometimes they did not even get their rations, because the U.S. and others were not ready to pay them, because 'they are about to hand-over anyway, why bother?'

And this played into the hands of the Sudan Government. President Bashir knew from Day 1 that there was not going to be military action, that there was not going to be a military invasion, à la either Iraq or Afghanistan. So for him, it is a very, very cheap political win for him to say: 'I am standing up to the U.S.: No UN troops'. He immediately could get his own militants on-side and gain international credibility across the Arab world. He knew that he could call the bluff of the UN from Day 1, and he trapped all the diplomatic energies of the United States and others in a blind alley, so that the real effort that was needed, which was to get a proper peace deal, only got the leftovers in terms of political and diplomatic energy.

This also raised the expectations of the Darfurians. It was very sad to see, on the last day of the negotiations, Abdulwahid Mohamed al Nur demanding of the Americans: 'I want guarantees, like Bosnia'. [Abdulwahid] wanted a NATO force. He sent his chief advisor to Washington to see if he could get a higher authority than Robert Zoellick, the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State to say that someone was going to deliver to him this NATO force. Zoellick said to him: 'No, you're not getting it'. So hopes were unfairly raised, and I think that this was one of the things that contributed to [the refusal of Abdulwahid] to sign [the Darfur Peace Agreement].

But I think that the worst aspect of this is that peacekeeping can only work as an adjunct to a political settlement. But what happened in Abuja was the other way around. It was very frustrating. (I was there, and we were in a crummy hotel on the edge of Abuja, paid next-to-nothing and eating intolerable food, with water that came on for one day in two. So, you know, I was quite grateful to get out). But we all knew this process. Everyone in the mediation knew that the [mediation process would require] several more months. But the moment that the U.S. twisted the arms of the African Union, and then the UN to say: 'we support a hand-over from the AU to the UN', then the U.S. said: 'This process has to finish now'. So on 12 April [2006], the Security Council said: 'There must be a hand-

over, the African Union has approved it. We even have a signal from the Sudan Government that they support it'. The shutters came down. Deadline: 30 April [2006] to conclude [the Agreement]. That was simply too quick. It meant that a document was put on the table that needed at least two months of discussion and it had to be approved within a week. And so the wheels came off the negotiation, and the whole thing fell apart. I fear that the tremendously good intentions behind this motivation for a better, stronger peace-keeping force went desperately awry. That political impulse was cynically abused by the White House. This contributed to the disaster that we have now.

I would just like to end by saying that the Darfur Peace Agreement was [the product of] a very flawed processes [and it was], in many ways, an inadequate document. But I fear that it was the best chance for Darfur, for peace. What I fear is that now, we see a process which is spinning out of control, and that it will be some years before the political alignment that could bring about peace will recur. I am afraid that I am fairly pessimistic about Darfur, and about the whole of Sudan. I fear that failure in Darfur could bring down the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and see new war between the north and the south as well. I really think that we need to focus on that question.